

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Disclosed is an apparatus for producing a pressurized stream of substantially inert gas.

The apparatus includes a compressor having an intake manifold and an output manifold.

5 The intake manifold receives a substantially inert gas stream and the output manifold
receives a stream of pressurized gas from the compressor. The apparatus further
includes a compressed gas re-circulation conduit connecting the output manifold to the
intake manifold such that a portion of the pressurized gas from the compressor is re-
circulated from the output manifold back to the intake manifold to maintain the gas
10 pressure within the intake manifold above atmospheric pressure and to prevent
atmospheric gases from being drawn into the intake manifold.